



## **CERT & Tornado Awareness Day Write-ups, 2004**

### **I.**

Ten Alexandria CERT members participated in the Statewide Tornado Drill on Tuesday March 16. The members were assigned to individual schools to witness and evaluate the drills. Members completed an evaluation form and reported to the CERT Program Coordinator.

### **II.**

Forty-six Arlington County CERT members from six of the neighborhood/cluster teams participated in a CERT tornado preparedness drill Saturday, March 6, 2004. The exercise created an opportunity for members to assess personal preparedness and their ability to adequately assist those around them. Though it was raining, members used their creativity and teamwork to coordinate activities either within their homes, neighborhoods or nearby parks. Each team responded in preparing and responding to the drill, whether it was creating scratch-n-sniff damage assessment props along with photos of damaged structures with gas leaks, gathering in a community park and documenting damage to the area, locating utility shut-offs at nearby buildings, conducting radio checks or practicing their phone trees. Afterwards, each team conducted a review of their efforts and response to the tornado drill.

### **III.**

Colonial Heights Emergency Management along with Lakeview Elementary School sponsored a Tornado Awareness Drill Tuesday, March 16. Participants included Colonial Heights Fire and Rescue, CERT members, Lakeview Elementary School, the City's School Board and Fort Lee Rescue. The exercise began promptly at 9:45 with fire arriving on the scene at 9:55

a.m. The school was without electricity the majority of the exercise. A fourth grade class was moulaged and participated as victims. The firefighters began responding to the fourth grade class unaware that CERT members were arriving on the scene. CERT members reported to the incident commander and were tasked with their roles. Two CERTs were assigned to the cafeteria to reassure the other school children, while another CERT member was assigned to the library or the treatment area for the immediate victims. The fourth CERT member assisted firefighters in transporting victims from the classroom to the library. Firefighters were able to assimilate CERTs into the scene efficiently and effectively without delay. The exercise not only incorporated the school system and first responders, but CERTs role, as well in an emergency. The CERT program was tested not only by the first responders, but also by CERT members themselves.

#### **IV.**

James City County's Fire Department sponsored a Tornado Awareness Day drill Tuesday, March 16. Eastern State Hospital participated as victims with the drill-taking place in their facility. Approximately eight CERT members were activated at 5:30 p.m. Before entering the building, two CERT members extinguished two burning fires. The team organized and entered the building with their buddies, while four CERTs remained outside. The two pairs did a quick assessment finding four victims inside the building with various injuries consisting of major bleeding, impaled objects and an electrocution. After notifying the incident commander, CERT members began applying their newfound knowledge on their patients. Each pair did patient assessments, applied triage methods and conducted search and rescue techniques. The exercise allowed James City CERT members to use their skills and knowledge in a very realistic drill while remembering their own safety comes first.

## Photos from Colonial Heights and James City

